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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that to survive in today's intense marketplace, it is not enough to be good at a few things. Rather, one must excel across the board--at communicating, innovating, execution, speed, selling, negotiating, service, leadership, teamwork and more. Every individual who wants to be a part of the future must learn to become extraordinary across-the-board. The author outlines the "extraordinary mindset" in action, and how counselors can determine if clients will become "extraordinary across-the-board", or struggle unnecessarily. (GCP)

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Extraordinary Across the Board

by
Aman Motwane

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Chapter Eighteen

Extraordinary Across the Board

Aman Motwane

Introduction

It's painful. But it's true —

- To survive in today's intense marketplace, it's not enough to be good at a few things. You must excel across the board, at pretty much everything. You must excel at communicating, innovating, execution, speed, selling, negotiating, service, leadership, teamwork and more. Otherwise, you're toast.
- If you don't learn how to become extraordinary across-the-board, you'll always struggle to sustain any success you muster (Think about it — How many individuals do you know who are good at just a few things and thrive in the long haul?).

The mandate is now clear. Every individual who wants to be part of the future must learn to become extraordinary across-the-board (EATB). Nothing less will do.

This means that every individual must completely change the way he/she looks at his/her career and the world of business.

- The old model of multiple initiatives is a recipe for disaster. What's required is one foundational initiative — become extraordinary across-the-board, or else. Any and all other initiatives must stem from this foundation.
- The old methods of learning and training are obsolete. All learning is futile unless it is built on the foundation of an extraordinary across-the-board mindset.
- In today's rapidly changing economy, you must be uncommonly nimble and uncommonly fast. But you'll never gain enough velocity and agility to remain competitive unless you are extraordinary across-the-board.
- The race has already begun. The first wave of EATB individuals and companies have already established a beachhead (think Southwest, Dell, Starbucks, Wal-Mart). Wait too long and the gap will only get wider.

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The Extraordinary Mindset in Action

How exactly does an EATB mindset affect your career and your future? The benefits are far-reaching.

- You gain the self-motivation and the self-discipline to deliver extraordinary performance.
- You approach every task with extraordinary creativity and innovation.
- All your relationships — with customers, employees, investors and even your friends and family — become deep and mutually beneficial.
- You become able to complete every project with extraordinary speed.
- You adapt to change with extraordinary ease.
- You gain a reputation for extraordinary leadership, extraordinary teamwork, extraordinary customer service, extraordinary results — good times or bad.

In a nutshell, the EATB Mindset is about seeing the world — and the world of business — in a totally new way.

- It's about seeing opportunities where others don't.
- It's about seeing possibilities where others can't.
- It's about seeing the untapped potential, in yourself and in everyone around you.
- It's about seeing what motivates everyone — employees, customers, investors — in a way others never do.
- It's about seeing ways to extract more productivity, more performance, more profitability in ways others could never imagine.

The Reality for Most Individuals And Organizations

Contrast the EATB mindset to most individuals and organizations.

- They easily pour all their resources — time, money and effort — into initiatives that appear promising, but bring very poor returns in the real world.
- They routinely mistake activity for productivity ... training for understanding ... information for insight ... technology for progress.
- With any new management initiative, they have less than a 10% chance of success.

In a nutshell, most individuals struggle simply because they don't start with the right foundation for success. This puts them at a substantial disadvantage in three ways —

- Without the right foundation, you treat every initiative as isolated, unrelated to other endeavors. Instead of building on what you've already accomplished, you must start each time from scratch.
- Without the right foundation, you waste your time learning tricks, techniques, rules, laws and habits — but gain very little insight into what really matters.
- Without the right foundation, you move one small step at a time instead of multiple mega steps at a time.

With the EATB mindset, you learn how to cut to the chase and progress at breakneck speed.

The Problem

The biggest problem in business today isn't that there is a dearth of information about becoming effective and successful — it is that there is too much. There is simply too much to do, too much to read, too much to remember. Instead of accelerating you forward, all this information bogs you down and actually sets you back. Information was supposed to empower us. But instead, it has left most of us powerless — and most don't even realize it.

One of the biggest problems fueled by the Information Age is that it has seduced most people to believe that all their problems stem from external circumstances. When I ask executives and professionals to explain why their success doesn't match their potential, most blame the roller coaster economy, unpredictable market conditions, adverse exchange rates, war, unfavorable industry trends, unfair competition, inadequate government and so on. But one look at companies such as Southwest, Starbucks, Dell and Wal-Mart who have weathered almost all their storms and it becomes clear that circumstance is a very poor indicator of success or failure.

If circumstance is not critical to success or failure, then what is? Why do some individuals succeed over the long haul, irrespective of circumstance, while others are doomed from the start, just pouring good money after bad? And how can you prevent a career from going under — or revive it if it has stagnated?

After years of researching and working with thousands of companies across the nation, I can finally give you the answers to these questions. In fact, I am now able to predict whether an individual will become extraordinary across-the-board ... or struggle unnecessarily. I can make this prediction with a very high degree of certainty within just a few

minutes of talking to an individual. Everyone has tell-tale signs and here are some of the most obvious ones.

Do you blame circumstance for your woes? For example, are you the type who would grouse about Wal-Mart coming to town and wiping out your small business? Or, do you blame civic leaders for not providing the right economic stimulus? Or, do you write off a competitor's success to "an unusual set of circumstances"? I've found that individuals who succeed in the long haul have a completely *different* mindset about the role of circumstance in their success.

Are you abuzz with lots of initiatives? The average individual juggles eleven new initiatives a year. But those who succeed in the long haul have a very disciplined approach to initiatives. They are not quick to jump on fads or even "once-in-a-lifetime opportunities." Their most important initiative, by far, is building a foundation for extraordinary success across-the-board over the long haul.

Does your back office — the area customers rarely visit — look impressive? The more impressive the back office looks, the less likely you will be to sustain success. Individuals who succeed in the long haul are less interested in appearances, or keeping up with cutting-edge technology. Their primary focus is on producing extraordinary results and all their equipment and technology is *stretched* towards this goal.

Do you have many systems, procedures, rules and handbooks? Most consultants insist that strict rules and policies are the backbone of a successful individual. They preach the importance of mission statements and well-laid-out business plans. But I've found the exact opposite to be true. Strict rules are usually a band-aid for undisciplined thinking.

Do you read all the latest books? Individuals who succeed in the long haul have a completely different mindset about learning. They stay away from management fads and they read the "latest, greatest" books very sparingly. Instead, their primary goal with learning is to strengthen their foundation for long-term success.

How Some Become Extraordinary

Individuals who become extraordinary across-the-board see the world — and the world of business — in a totally different way. They have an awareness, thinking and understanding that goes beyond positive thinking and most of the other tricks and techniques prescribed in contemporary

texts. They know how to immediately home in on the crux of their problems and their opportunities.

They are not overwhelmed by complex business or career issues because they can see the underlying simplicity in everything.

This comes from a perspective that is simultaneously simple and profound, which allows them to do less and yet accomplish more ... read less and yet understand more ... react less and pro-act more ... engage in less analysis, yet have more insight ... engage in less activity, yet be more productive.

Conclusion

The gap between those who are EATB and those who are not is already getting wide. Those who don't act now to learn the EATB mindset for success risk looking back and finding themselves on the wrong side of the gap.

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